

WELCOME TO THE SMGCS BULLETIN BOARD

Updated April 9, 1996

1. PURPOSE

2. APPLICABILITY

Q. Should airports with “new” or “existing” takeoff-only operations below 1,200 feet RVR comply with AC 120-57?

A. Yes. Operation Specifications for Part 121 and Part 135 operators permit them to perform takeoffs down to 600 feet RVR if the required ground facilities (runway centerline lights and markings, and touchdown zone and rollout RVR reporting systems) and other requirements are in place and operative. Therefore, many Category II landing facilities are also suitable for 600 feet RVR takeoffs. Such airports should comply with AC 120-57, especially those with a significant amount of time in low visibility conditions. It has been shown that takeoff-only or mixed operations present more of an opportunity for runway incursions than landing-only operations.

Q. Will a new Category III landing operation (new runway, runway end, etc.) be approved without an acceptable SMGCS plan being developed and submitted?

A. No. To enhance the safety of low visibility operations the development and submittal of a SMGCS plan to the regional Flight Standards representative must be accomplished prior to approving the new operation.

Q. What is the timetable for installing runway guard lights?

A. Once the lighting specification is published, the installation of runway guard lights should be installed within 1-2 years. In the meantime, they should be listed in the SMGCS plan under the Near Term section.

3. RELATED FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS (FAR) AND RESOURCES.

4. DEFINITIONS.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF SMGCS.

Q. At certain airports, unusual meteorological conditions may cause one runway to be below 1,200 feet RVR while another runway (non-SMGCS) is above 1,200 feet RVR. Can operations on the above 1,200 feet RVR runway continue while operations are conducted on the below 1,200 feet RVR runway?

A. Such an operation may be approved on a case-by-case basis. As a general policy, all runways, other than SMGCS runways, should be closed by the airport operator. If the airport operator wants an exception, the SMGCS working group should carefully consider how operations on the “non-SMGCS” runway might impact the low visibility operations. When SMGCS procedures are placed in effect, they are in effect for the entire airport. Therefore, the SMGCS working group should determine whether SMGCS equipment (e.g., taxiway lights, etc.) and/or procedures are necessary for areas of the airport which may be above 1,200 feet RVR when SMGCS procedures are placed in effect. If so, they should be addressed in the SMGCS plan. Furthermore, construction, normal airfield maintenance, vehicle access, and other activities in the area of the airport above 1,200 feet RVR should be evaluated to determine what limitations, if any, are needed.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

Q. Who should review the SMGCS plan from the airport operators?

A. The Flight Standards representative in the controlling region is the main point-of-contact for the review of SMGCS procedures. The Flight Standards representative should coordinate the review of the SMGCS plan, taxi route chart, etc. with their regional Airports and Air Traffic counterparts.

7. VISUAL AID REQUIREMENTS

Q. Can geographic position markings be installed at airports which will operate below 1,200 feet RVR, but not below 600 feet RVR?

A. Yes. Geographic position markings may be installed and used for operations between 1,200 and 600 feet RVR if desired by Air Traffic and the airport operator. **Geographic position markings are allowed only in the movement area.**

Q. Can geographic position markings be installed at airports that do not operate below 1,200 feet RVR?

A. No. Geographic position markings are intended only for low visibility operations. For visibilities above 1,200 feet RVR an appropriate surface painted sign, specified in AC 150/5340-1, may be used.

8. SURFACE MOVEMENT SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS (SMSS)

9. AIRPORT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Q. Should ARFF equipment be pre-positioned for airport operations?

A. An airport operator may pre-position ARFF equipment to improve the response to an emergency during low visibility conditions. ARFF equipment should not be pre-positioned so that it becomes an obstacle, e.g., in runway or taxiway safety areas. NOTE: The pre-positioning of ARFF equipment is not required by the FAA.

Q. Is the use of follow-me vehicles acceptable for aircraft taxi operations below 600 feet RVR in movement areas?

A. Except for the handling of Part 91 operators, follow-me vehicles and/or towing vehicles may **NOT** be used for the normal movement of aircraft on the movement area. However, follow-me vehicles and/or towing vehicles may be used on the movement area to handle unusual circumstances, e.g., when an aircraft or vehicle is lost on the airport surface or when the safety of takeoff or landing operations may be in jeopardy.

10. AIRPORT CONDITION REPORTING

11. FLIGHT OPERATIONS

12. AIRPORT LOW VISIBILITY TAXI ROUTE CHART

APPENDIX 1--RELATED READING MATERIAL

APPENDIX 2--SAMPLE SURFACE MOVEMENT GUIDANCE AND CONTROL SYSTEM PLAN

APPENDIX 3--GUIDELINES FOR SMGCS OPERATIONS BELOW 1,200 FEET RVR DOWN TO AND INCLUDING 600 FEET RVR

APPENDIX 4--GUIDELINES FOR SMGCS OPERATIONS BELOW 600
FEET RVR

APPENDIX 5--SAMPLE TAXIWAY CONFIGURATION

APPENDIX 6--SMGCS BULLETIN BOARD

MISCELLANEOUS SMGCS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.